

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Sweet Summer Pick...Ripe for Reading

MT. PLEASANT, S.C. (June 11, 2008) – Family vacations often rejuvenate the senses, sparking creativity, unique outlooks and new ideas. That is certainly the case for one California children’s author, who is reaping the ripened fruit of her imagination.

Terry Pierce got the idea for her newest picture book while vacationing in Oregon. “**Blackberry Banquet** came to me one day when I was approaching my favorite wild blackberry bush to pick berries for making a pie,” explains Pierce. “As I neared the bush, a flurry of animals fled from it, and it made me start thinking about how we’re not the only animals who enjoy such a sweet treat!”

Blackberry Banquet (Sylvan Dell Publishing, 2008) tells a similar story – only Terry replaced herself with a big black bear. In the 32-page book illustrated by Lisa Downey, forest animals “squeak,” “tweet,” “slurp,” “yip” and “chomp” over the sweet, plump fruit of a wild blackberry bush, but when a bear arrives to take part in the feast, chaos strikes. The last few pages feature a “For Creative Minds” educational section with fun facts, a blackberry smoothie recipe and other activities.

Written in cumulative rhyming text, the story is a great read-aloud for children. “I originally wrote it in prose, but after letting it simmer for about a year, I knew it had to be told in verse,” says Pierce. “Some stories are simply better written in rhyme, and this was one of them.”

Though it’s easy to picture professional writers tapping away on the keyboard while overlooking an ocean view and sipping on a double-shot no-whip latte, Pierce says writing for kids is actually a lot of hard work. “Of course there are moments when I’m clicking in full creative mode and sipping that latte as the words pour out of me, but more often, I’m working on multiple revisions and rewrites of a story, sculpting and molding each sentence to be its best and searching for the perfect word.”

A former pre-primary Montessori teacher, Pierce taught for 22 years before following her dream of writing for children in 1999. Now the author of 17 books for young readers, including picture books, easy readers, joke books and non-fiction, Pierce calls her career change “the best mid-life crisis ever.”

“I love it,” she says, “and I don’t see myself doing anything else in the future.”

She also teaches children’s writing workshops for children and adults, is a visiting author at elementary schools and serves on the Ventura/Santa Barbara regional board of the Society for Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). Additionally, Terry has presented programs for the California Reading Association, the Kern Reading Association, SCBWI, Kern Community College District and various school districts.

The attractive and comedic illustrations come from the talented hand of Lisa Downey. Downey spent fifteen years in the graphic design industry before moving to children’s book illustration. She works in pastels and watercolors, and she says that people often underestimate the research that goes into each book.

"Because Sylvan Dell's books strive to be technically accurate, it's very important for the animals and objects to be true-to-life," says Downey.

Readers interested in learning more about Terry Pierce and her books can visit her Web site, www.terrypiercebooks.com. For more information on illustrator Lisa Downey, visit her site, at <http://www.studiodowney.com>. A matching black bear stuffed animal and free educational materials – such as audio readings, activity ideas, learning links and interactive quizzes – are available to supplement the book at www.SylvanDellPublishing.com. Like all Sylvan Dell books, *Blackberry Banquet* was vetted for scientific accuracy and is aligned to various national and state curriculum standards.

"This is one of the reasons I was attracted to Sylvan Dell," Pierce adds. "As a former teacher, I loved their focus on education and how they go beyond the book to create additional, meaningful learning activities for young readers. This is what brings home the essence of a story."

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Visuals & Other Requests:

For cover art or Pierce's headshot, visit <http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/ImageGallery.htm> or e-mail SaraDobie@SylvanDellPublishing.com.

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